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Reagan, Duarte, Turner criticize Woodward's book

By Jeremiah O'Leary
 THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Reagan, Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte and a former CIA director joined the critical chorus against Bob Woodward's book about the late William J. Casey yesterday.

"I think that there's an awful lot of fiction about a man who was unable to communicate at all and is now being quoted as if he were doing nothing but talk his head off," the president said of the book about his longtime CIA chief.

Mr. Reagan also vehemently denied that Mr. Casey carried out any covert operations without his knowledge. "I think I did know [what Mr. Casey was doing], and there are a lot of things he's being charged with right now," he said. "And I don't think any of them has a basis in fact."

Mr. Woodward himself acknowledged in a published report yesterday that Mr. Casey was not completely lucid when the CIA chief allegedly indicated in a death-bed in-

terview that he had known about the diversion of Iranian arms sale profits to the Nicaraguan rebels.

"On the reporter level, I don't have evidence. I have a nod," Mr. Woodward said. "I would not describe Casey as completely lucid."

Mr. Duarte dismissed as laughable an allegation in the book that he served as a secret informer for the CIA, while former CIA Director Stansfield Turner charged that Mr. Woodward's work did the country "a lot of harm" and may endanger some CIA agents.

Mr. Woodward wrote that Mr. Casey told him Mr. Duarte was more than a casual informant, but was not fully controlled by the CIA.

The charge, Mr. Duarte said, "makes me laugh... I can declare emphatically that this is absolutely false. It is a lie that they tried to bring out at election time when I was a candidate for the presidency [in 1984]."

"Now a certain gentleman has brought it out again in his book, in which he writes some things that do

not appear to be true, among others that he had gone to talk to Casey when he was sick and dying," Mr. Duarte said.

Mr. Turner said in a television interview, "Bob Woodward did the country a lot of harm in this book by disclosing techniques of collecting intelligence and by hurting relations between the United States and other countries through the exposures of things we did to those countries."

The disclosing of techniques "lets any country we might possibly spy on put up its guard," he said.

Mr. Reagan also said yesterday that he did not sign a directive, as alleged in the Woodward book, that led to a massacre in Beirut. The book states that Mr. Casey worked with the Saudi Arabian intelligence service on three covert operations, including an attempt to kill Hezbollah faction leader Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah with a car bomb that killed 80 people.

• This article is based in part on wire service reports.